

Iraqiya TV
20:30 Newscast
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Newscaster:

Students of Baghdad University's basketball team managed to beat the masters of politics at the U.S Embassy Baghdad in an initiative launched by the latter to strengthen relations between the two countries in general, and particularly in sports relations.

Reporter:

Based on an invitation extended by the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad, a basketball match was held at the health club at the U.S Embassy between Baghdad University's basketball team and a number of amateurs from the U.S. Embassy aiming at strengthening relations between the two countries, including sports relations.

Ambassador Hill: [as transmitted in Arabic by the interpreter]

We are looking forward to working with Iraqis in several ways, including sports, culture and other matters, more than what we have done in the past.

Henry Haggard: [as transmitted in Arabic by the interpreter]

I work for the U.S. Embassy and one of the programs I'm interested in is sports in order to strengthen relations with Iraqis.

Reporter:

The atmosphere of the event is friendly and the players are more interested in exercising with their U.S. counterparts than in the actual game, because this particular game is not being played strictly to the rules.

Iraqi player: [Haitham Abdul-Wahed]

It was a friendly match with the Americans and a good opportunity to meet them and play with them.

U.S. Embassy Staff Member: [John...]

I came here and I work for the Accountability Office of the U.S. Embassy and I play with the Iraqis for pleasure and also to strengthen relations.

Reporter:

The result of the match was in favor of the Baghdad University team who has won in all the charges down the court despite the good performance of their competitors.

Dr. Selwan Salih: [Prof. at Baghdad University and the coach of the team]

Our team succeeded in winning all the runs down the court during that match and it was a friendly match to improve relations between Iraqis and Americans.

Reporter:

The U.S. Embassy to Baghdad has expressed the desire to normalize Iraqi sports and emerge it from international bans imposed on Iraq.

Ambassador Hill: [as transmitted in Arabic by the interpreter]

This is what we are trying to accomplish. To try and normalize sports to lift any bans on Iraqi sports and to be able to compete with other sports.

Reporter:

This friendly event may lead to more meetings in the future ,as expressed by U.S. officials at the U.S. Embassy, Baghdad.

Zeyad Khafaji for Iraqiya, Baghdad.